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## **UCT medical graduate awarded prestigious Gates Cambridge Scholarship**

*Khayelitsha-based doctor is the only South African among 95 scholars selected globally this year*

University of Cape Town (UCT) medical graduate Gilad Shorer has been selected as one of 95 outstanding individuals worldwide to join the prestigious Gates Cambridge Scholars. This recognition highlights his exceptional potential and commitment to making a significant impact in the field of medicine and beyond.

The new cohort will commence their studies in October 2025. This year marks the 25th anniversary of Gates Cambridge, the University of Cambridge's prestigious postgraduate scholarship programme for the most socially engaged and academically brilliant students worldwide.

### **'A humbling experience'**

Shorer, who earned his MBChB from UCT in 2022, will pursue a Master of Philosophy in Translating Devices and Advanced Therapies Research at the University of Cambridge. This opportunity, he said, will equip him with critical expertise and hands-on experience in transforming innovative concepts into practical, high-impact medical solutions.

Shorer said being named a Gates Cambridge Scholar is an extraordinary honour and a profoundly humbling experience. "While this marks a significant transition – from practicing medicine in Khayelitsha to studying at Cambridge – being part of a community committed to addressing global challenges gives me immense motivation. This opportunity will be truly transformative, enabling me to contribute meaningfully to advancements in healthcare and health systems, which is a cause I am deeply passionate about," he said.

He added: "Being supported by the Gates Cambridge community is deeply meaningful to me, and I am truly excited for the journey ahead. I would like to thank my family, friends and mentors for supporting me throughout and helping me get to this next chapter."

### **Addressing health inequities**

As a medical doctor working in Khayelitsha, Shorer witnessed the profound health inequities affecting vulnerable populations. Limited resources and barriers to access often result in poorer health outcomes for these communities. "This motivated me as a UCT student to

seek solutions. While earning my MBChB and Biomedical Science honours (Immunology and Infectious Diseases), I co-founded the Mandla Health platform aimed at addressing some of these healthcare access challenges. This experience fuelled my passion for using technology to bridge health gaps," he said.

Shorer shared that co-founding the Mandla Health platform opened many doors for him, including winning UCT InvestSoc Leopard's Lair competition, participating in the Africa-Oxford Health Innovation Platform, and inspiring the confidence to approach medicine through a public and global health lens, using grassroots technologies to drive change within local communities.

His long-term vision is to become a clinician-scientist and innovator committed to developing sustainable, ethical and scalable healthcare solutions. "I aim for far-reaching positive impact via interventions for diverse settings – urban/rural South Africa and other resource-limited areas globally," he said.

### **'Exceptional programme'**

The 2025 scholars come from all over the world, and their research covers everything from space agriculture and bilingualism to cyberbiosecurity and building responsible AI systems for supporting disabled communities.

Professor Eilís Ferran, Provost of the Gates Cambridge Trust, said: "I'm delighted to announce our 25th anniversary cohort of 95 new scholars. Gates Cambridge has always selected scholars based on their outstanding academic achievement and their commitment to change the world for the better. Already they are having a ripple effect in the many disciplines and industry sectors they have gone on to work in. We know that our new scholars will thrive in the rich, international community at Cambridge and we trust that they will go on to have a significant impact in their various fields and more broadly, tackling the urgent global challenges we face today."

The Gates Cambridge Scholarship programme was established through a US\$210 million donation to the University of Cambridge from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation in 2000. At its heart is a dedication to social leadership and academic excellence.

Bill Gates, co-founder of the Gates Foundation and Microsoft, said: "When we started the Gates Cambridge Scholarship in 2000, we wanted to help exceptional students from all over the world experience the university's 800-year legacy of higher education, learn from each other, and prepare to be global leaders. Twenty-five years later, the alumni of the programme have gone on to remarkable careers, in fields ranging from public health to international relations, chemistry to information technology, and oceanography to neuroscience. We couldn't be prouder of the difference they're making, and the leaders they have become."

Professor Deborah Prentice, Vice-Chancellor of the University of Cambridge and Chair of the Board of the Gates Cambridge Trust, said: "We are incredibly proud of all that Gates Cambridge has achieved. This exceptional programme is successfully producing the leaders that will address many of the common challenges facing humanity. As we celebrate 25 years of impact, we look forward with excitement to what the next 25 years will bring."



Gilad Shorer

Photo: Supplied

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